



## **Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop #2**

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

### **Goals and Strategies Exercise – Combined Workshop Notes**

#### **I. Refine the Goals identified in the last workshop, and provide strategies to meet the goals.**

##### **1. Goal: Attract industry and expand small business opportunity**

###### ***A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:***

- Improve quality of life and local amenities to retain / attract workforce
- Workforce training
- More business-friendly regulatory climate – list specific problematic regulation
- Other: School accreditation; broadband, childcare for workers

###### ***B. Strategies identified for attracting industry and expanding small business opportunity:***

- State and federal environmental regulations are problematic (e.g., stormwater requirements)
- Continue offering existing tax incentives for small businesses
- Incubator program for small businesses
- Business coach program (mentoring for entrepreneurs)
- Top-notch salaries for teachers
- Need childcare services for workers but it is not financially feasible, explore subsidies available for parents or for childcare business owners

###### ***C. Where should industry and small business be located?***

- Exit 4 has seen the most growth over the last few years
- Exits 8 and 13 are also good options with 13 having opportunity for redevelopment

##### **2. Goal: Improve education system & facilities**

###### ***A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:***

- K-12 facility replacement
- Career & technical programs
- Workforce training
- Other: Alternative school



**B. Strategies identified for improving the education system:**

- Replace the high school and somehow incorporate Belfield (5th grade)
- Highlight school's strength's – dual enrollment, strong pre-K program, Governor's school, Upward Bound, and technical classes
- Pay plan studies that compares to North Carolina and schools throughout Virginia (not only surrounding Counties)
- Need better discipline, parenting, food access. Offer life skills and parenting classes
- Consider high school day care program to support attendance for teen parents

**C. If you believe new educational facilities are required, where would they be best located?**

- Near the existing elementary school

**3. Goal: Support new recreation & entertainment opportunities**

**A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:**

- Events & programming of existing public space
- Privately owned commercial entertainment – bowling, movie theater, etc.
- Other: Indoor sports arenas but operating costs are high

**B. Strategies identified for providing or attracting new recreation/entertainment:**

- Promote existing assets – for example: there is a trail near the elementary school and around the government complex; a playground is being added on County complex grounds
- The Arts Council offers 4 shows per year; that program could be expanded
- Arts & theater programs could be added utilizing existing facilities
- Community lacks indoor sports facilities – that could be a need that could service the larger region
- Any new investment would need a source of operating expenses. The community can not afford facilities with high user fees. Grants are available for the capital cost, but it is the maintenance and utility costs that become an issue.

**C. Where would public recreation facilities and private commercial entertainment businesses be best located?**

None discussed.

**4. Goal: Improve and diversify housing stock**



- A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:**
- Single family homes under \$200,000 (e.g., smaller homes on smaller lots)
  - Affordable single-family rental housing
  - Expand financial programs to boost homeownership
  - Other: Progressive independent to assisted living
- B. Strategies identified to improve housing and neighborhoods:**
- Highlight success story at Washington Park. Southern Virginia Development Corporation has helped address credit issues. Look into similar program at Joel's Mill Rd.
  - Subsidy program to support local handyman services to elderly
- C. Where would new housing and rehabilitation be best located or most needed:**
- New housing: near the correctional center
  - Housing rehab: Jonesmill and (???)
- 5. Goal: Take full advantage of transportation infrastructure (I-95, SR 58, Airport, Railroad)**
- A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:**
- Intersection safety improvements
  - Sidewalks – Brink Rd Salem Church to City
  - Road maintenance
- B. Strategies identified for improving or better utilizing transportation assets:**
- Community wants basic maintenance – striping, grass cutting to maintain line of sight and visibility for deer, pothole repair
  - Sidenote on this...Econ Dev. Said rail capacity is maxed out but Norfolk & Southern has a rail line sitting empty that the community tries to get them to sell (for shortline) or do something with – N&S says repairs needed are too costly.
- C. Where should transportation facilities be enhanced, improved, or better utilized?**
- Add sidewalks on Brink Road from City limits to Salem Church Road
  - Exit 4 – safety
- 6. Goal: Increase communication and cooperation between government, citizens, business community, and faith-based community**
- A. Issues identified as most important for meeting this goal:**



- More opportunities for direct communication to local officials (e.g., direct e-mail, town hall meetings)
- Increased transparency/open government processes and availability of information
- Educational opportunities about government processes

***B. Strategies identified for promoting better communication and cooperation between government entities, citizens, businesses, and other organizations:***

- “Town Hall” setting where residents can ask questions
- Increase social media presence (Facebook, County newsletter, etc) and perhaps re-start county newsletter
- Increase trust in government – recent efforts include livestreaming meetings and improved utility billing system
- Improve online services – for example electronic payment for permitting
- Junior board – invite students to shadow board members to groom future leaders
- Internships in gov. offices

## **II. Mapping Exercise**

1. Consistent with the Future Land Use Map in the current Comprehensive Plan, it was determined that future growth should be directed in and around Emporia (and Jarratt & Skippers to a lesser extent) and around major transportation corridors and intersections due to the availability of utilities and services. This would primarily direct growth to the Urban Services Areas also identified in the current Comprehensive Plan, but would also include areas that have received services since the last plan.
2. The current Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance also identify Rural Community Development Hubs. These hubs are small communities or crossroads in rural areas that are, or have in the past, been considered community centers with development that services the surrounding rural areas with markets, gas stations, post offices, mills, feed stores, etc. The following revisions were suggested regarding these hubs:
  - Pleasant Shade should be added as a rural hub; Hubs need better boundaries
  - Possibly remove Clairsville
  - Consider enlarging the radius of the hubs

## **III. Closing Thoughts**

- We have a lot of opportunities – we have to figure out how to bring it to fruit.
- A lot of services are shared with the City. We must figure out how to work collaboratively toward long term goals.